

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 005067

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, NEA/PPD, NEA/PPA, NEA/AGS, INR/IZ, INR/P

E.0. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, DECEMBER 15th ELECTION, TRANSPARENCY; BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: The major theme of today's editorials was Thursday's parliamentary election.

Analysis: While the majority of the day's editorials addressed the election the treatment varied greatly depending on the nature of the press. Independent Al-Fourat's editorial, "My Country, My Country" hailed the role of Iraqis in their new democracy and emphasized the unity of the country. Allawi's mouthpiece Baghdad had the editorial, "Iyad Allawi and His Vision for National Unity" which lauded his plans for the country's future.

The Hezb'allah in Iraq newspaper, Al-Bayna's editorial, "The Purple Revolution, the Paupers' Revolution" celebrated the success of the election and condemned those who questioned its integrity.

Independent Al-Sabah Al-Jadeed's, "Hard Times" addressed unemployment and criticized government officials for being preoccupied with personal interests. The Ad-Dawa party's eponymous newspaper published an editorial, "This Is How a Loving Person Addresses Iraqis," praising Al-Ja'afari for his speech to Iraqis during a visit to Najaf. Al-Bayyan, also affiliated with Ad-Dawa, published, "The Aftermath of Victory" which examined the role of the United Iraqi Alliance following a successful election. END SUMMARY.

-----  
TABLE OF CONTENTS  
-----

- [1A. "Lining Up" \(As-Sabah, 12/20\)](#)
- [1B. "Comprehension" \(Al-Adala, 12/20\)](#)
- [1C. "Post Elections" \(Al-Ittihad, 12/20\)](#)
- [1D. "A Result of the Elections: A Fivefold Increase in Fuel Prices" \(Al-Mada, 12/20\)](#)
- [1E. "What Follows the Elections?" \(Ad-Dustoor, 12/20\)](#)

-----  
SELECTED COMMENTARIES  
-----

[1A. "Lining Up"](#)  
(As-Sabah - Iraqi Media Network, government financed, pro-coalition, published this front-page editorial by Muhammad Al-Shaboot that dealt with how religious, ethnic and sectarian divisions dominated the elections. In part the editorial reads)

"Sectarian and ethnic lineups in the last election were far more evident than the previous one held in January--then you could have found Arabic names on Kurdish lists and Sunnis on Shiite lists with a few Christians here and there. Matters have changed in the last election with almost entirely Kurdish and Shiite lists, with other new lists based solely on religion and ethnicity, which explains the increasing number of political entities from 112 in January to 300 in the last election. Some might find this ethnic and sectarian division in the elections appealing, while some may not, but the problem remains that this trend might not be the best way to form the basis of a modern state."

[1B. "Comprehension"](#)  
(Al-Adala, affiliated with SCIRI, led by Abdul Aziz Al-Hakim, no bias, published this page-three editorial by Dr. Ali Khalif. The columnist stressed the need for Iraq to flourish once again and urged citizens not to complain about the government's decisions for the sake of the country. In part the editorial reads)

"After the major political changes in the new Iraq, undoubtedly there are major economic changes that will follow this political achievement. The Iraqi economy has suffered a lot due to the errant policies of the former regime; there wasn't even a real economy that could maintain the state and citizen's rights. Iraq is heading towards a market economy and will be open to investment. Citizens will have a real role in building their country's economy and Iraqi citizens will comprehend this in the near future after they get rid of the remainders of the former regime and begin dealing with the new Iraq full of thoughts and ambitions."

**1C. "Post Elections"**

(Al-Ittihad - affiliated with the PUK, led by Jalal Talabani, pro-coalition, published this front-page editorial promoting accord among the political blocs, especially in this sensitive post-election stage. In part the editorial reads)

"The Elections are over and perhaps in less than a week the IECI will announce the results. The major blocs will begin negotiating with each other to agree to a new political map for Iraq, the first stage of which will be electing a president, two vice-presidents and the formation of a new government that will run the country's affairs for the next four years. Preliminary results show the Kurdish Alliance will be a strong bloc in the Iraqi parliament and it will negotiate to shape the governmental and parliamentary map. Consensus is one of the primary Iraqi principles and electing a political Kurdish figure for one of the two senior ministerial posts is one of the first Kurdish priorities."

**1D. "A Result of the Elections: A Fivefold Increase in Fuel Prices"**

(Al-Mada - independent, no bias, published this page-three editorial by Rahman Al-Jawari that dealt with the government's unpopular decision to increase fuel prices. In part the editorial reads)

"Iraqi's ink-stained fingers didn't have time to dry, nor did their feet have the chance to recover from long distance walks to polling stations before receiving the gift of fuel prices increasing--fivefold. This decision was made three days prior to the election, and was put into effect three days after Election Day to add a new burden to the elected government and a new concern for people who already fear for their future in the era of a new democratic government. Iraqis should be glad as they float over a lake of oil but can't provide petrol for their vehicles, kerosene for their heaters or meet their children's needs."

**1E. "What Follows the Elections?"**

(Ad-Dustoor - independent, no bias, published this back page editorial by Hashim Hassan that questioned the likely competence of the new government and whether it will serve the public's interest. In part the editorial reads)

"Millions of Iraqis participated in the elections to confirm their commitment to democracy that claimed many lives along its path; until now the fruits of those sacrifices have been harvested by others who monopolize parliamentary seats and divide ministries and embassies leaving the people with no idea of what is happening. We have the right to question what will follow the election and what kind of struggle will ensue to seize government posts. Will the interests of Iraq and the people be the basis of power sharing or will we see incompetent ministers and officials lacking the lowest level of required qualifications?"

KHALILZAD